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SUBJECT: HAITI CORRECTIONS AND PRISONS UPDATE

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11. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified - please protect accordingly.

12. (U) Summary: 227 new corrections officers graduated from the Police Academy on July 18 under a cloud of controversy and amid an on-going investigation of recruitment practices. Changes in personnel at the Men's Penitentiary occur as the population approaches 3800. Two prison escapes highlight the poor security and infrastructure of the nation's prisons. The GOH is moving forward with prison construction plans with the help of international partners. End summary.

Corrections Officers Graduate

13. (U) On July 18, 227 new corrections officers graduated from training at the Police Academy to join the ranks of the Haitian National Police (HNP). As corrections is part of the HNP, all corrections officers are technically police officers as well. In a departure from the tradition of multiple speakers from the GOH and the international community at such ceremonies, just two HNP officials spoke at the graduation ceremony: Academy Director Maxime and HNP Director General Mario Andresol. Director Maxime focused on the rule of law, anti-corruption, and human rights, particularly the need to respect and protect prisoners' rights. In addition to ensuring the safety of the prisoners, he emphasized that the officers' duty was to assure the security of society.

14. (SBU) In a surprisingly frank speech, DG Andresol welcomed the new officers and then blasted the HNP Direction of Penitentiary Administration (DAP) for the way in which the class was recruited. He called the process badly flawed and stated that an investigation was on-going. He linked this to the fight against internal corruption and announced that he had dismissed 19 from the class already and that perhaps others would follow. He emphasized that this group was the first class of corrections officers to get full training as HNP officers and that, as such, they must respect the HNP rules. He urged them to resist corruption, respect the law, and promote the police as a public institution that the

Haitian people can trust. He also appealed to the international community to assist Haiti in improving its prison infrastructure and the conditions of detention. (Comment: HNP sources told NAS Director they believe this corrections class fiasco may cost the Director of DAP his job in spite of his political connections. NAS had agreed to provide uniforms for the class but was unable to do so as the DAP failed to provide the cadets' personal information to allow Post to conduct required Leahy vetting. It appears DAP was worried about what may be uncovered if the U.S. undertook vetting of any kind. End comment.)

National Penitentiary Update

15. (U) As of August 17, the inmate count at the Men's Penitentiary stood at 3,799, almost four times the capacity of the facility. The severe overcrowding has led to numerous fights among the inmates, with some injuries resulting. The high population is also straining the already poor infrastructure, with the kitchen being too small to feed such large numbers and the intake area now being used to house prisoners. Post has ordered equipment to help ease some of the pressure on the kitchen and a project to upgrade the infirmary and build an isolation ward for TB and other contagious prisoners is being finalized. In response to the problems in the prison, a new Director, Olmaille Bien-Aime, and new Head of Operations have been appointed. However, given the limited resources and the rate at which prisoners continue to enter the facility (approx. 100 per month), it is doubtful they will be able to have much impact on living conditions. The MINUSTAH U.S. Corrections Officer assigned to that facility continues to supervise the Titanic Plus

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project to improve sanitation in the largest cell block, a project privately funded by two U.S. doctors. NAS/INL Corrections Advisor is working with the DAP and MINUSTAH engineers to obtain sanitation plans that will be used by NAS and USAID to move other sanitation and health projects forward.

Prison Escapes

16. (U) On the night of June 29, 16 prisoners escaped from the prison in Carrefour. Security at the prison was lax due to short staffing and construction at the prison site that had allowed easy access to the exterior. Among those who escaped were individuals charged with rape, attempted murder, murder, kidnapping and car theft, none of which have been apprehended. On July 7, ten prisoners escaped from the prison at Grande Riviere du Nord by overpowering the guard serving lunch. Seven were recaptured. The HNP were able to respond quickly in this case as the police station is next to the prison. Positive repercussions from the prison escape this spring in Cap Haitien are being felt as the DAP has undertaken a training program in all three northern prisons to focus on appropriate security measures to prevent further escapes.

Future Prison Construction Plans

17. (U) The Government of Haiti (GOH) recently decided to locate a multi-purpose prison complex approximately 0 kilometers outside Port au Prince at Morne-a-Cbrit. The site lacks all basic services, including power grid, water wells, sewage disposal, and roads. In addition, it appears to lie at least partially within a flood plain. The GOH has decided to trade a much smaller plot of land in the rapidly developing Tabarre area (site of the new U.S. embassy) for the 200 acre plot. Four prisons - for 800 men, 250 women,

200 male juveniles, and 10 female juveniles - will ultimately be constructed there. The U.S. is working with the GOH on plans for the female prison, a priority group needing attention. In the interim before construction at Morne-a-Cabrit is possible, NAS will provide a generator to the current women's facility in Petionville (the facility has been without a working generator for over a year) and will construct a small area to house pregnant women and nursing mothers (under Haitian law newborns remain with the mothers for three months within the prison). NAS will also construct a recreation area and multipurpose room at the male juvenile facility to allow for more extensive vocational and recreational activities there. The male juvenile facility is the best run, due to the involvement of an influential Haitian businesswoman, and recently had 29 juveniles successfully pass the national exams for completion of either elementary education or the fundamental mid-level education cycle.

SANDERSON